



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Urges Everyone To Keep Safety in Mind This Holiday Season

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) are urging people to keep safety in mind when decorating and celebrating this holiday season.

“If small children will be visiting over the holidays, check your home to make sure it is childproof,” said Diana Read, director of the North Dakota Department of Health’s Injury Prevention Program. “Cover electrical outlets, and store medicines, cleaning supplies and poisonous substances out of reach. Unload all firearms, place them in a locked location and store ammunition separately. Use safety gates to keep children away from stairways.”

The Department of Health and the CPSC offer the following safety tips:

- If visiting in a home with children, make sure all medicines are kept out of the reach of children.
- Do not burn candles on or near trees or curtains. Never leave burning candles unattended and make sure they are out of the reach of children and pets.
- Use only noncombustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if swallowed by children.
- Check all lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Discard all faulty cords and lights.

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- Hang breakable or sharp ornaments on upper tree branches out of the reach of small children and pets. Avoid decorations that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- Keep live plants such as mistletoe, holly berries and poinsettias out of the reach of children and pets. Some are poisonous; others may cause severe stomach illness.
- Test smoke detectors to ensure they are working, and review the family fire escape plan.
- To protect others from secondhand smoke, it's best to ask holiday party guests to smoke outside. Check for carelessly discarded cigarettes before going to bed. Place ashtrays in the sink, rather than emptying into the trashcan. Empty all glasses, bottles and cans, and place liquor bottles out of reach of children. It doesn't take much alcohol to poison small children who may get up earlier than their parents. When attending holiday parties, always choose a designated driver.
- Remember to buckle your safety belt and to require everyone in the car to buckle up, even on short trips to the shopping mall. This could save your life and the life of your loved ones.

The last safety tip Read offers is for people to slow down, relax and enjoy the holiday season. "Many injuries occur because we are stressed and in a hurry to get things done," Read said. "We forget to think ahead about potential hazards and what we can do to eliminate them."

For more information, contact Diana Read or Dawn Mayer, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4537 or 701.328.4533.

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